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Lord Carrington, Secretary of
State for Defence, in the House
of Lords on October 31, 1973:

Speaking in the debate on foreign affairs and defense in the House of Lords on October 31, the Secretary of State for Defence, Lord Carrington, commented on the success the 9-member European Community has achieved in producing a unified approach to transatlantic relations.

"For the very first time in their dealings with an outside power, in this case our old and close friend the United States, the nine members of the European Community have succeeded in reaching agreement on common positions, on the basis of which a single spokesman for the Nine, in the presence of representatives of all the Community's members, has negotiated with the Americans*.

"For the first time it has been possible to say to the Americans: 'these are the views of Europe,' without the need for dissent or qualification on the part of any individual country among the Nine. And the Europeans have been able to talk constructively to the Americans on the basis of the common positions already agreed."

/These ...

*In Copenhagen last September the Danish Foreign Minister, Mr. K.B. Andersen, in his capacity as Chairman of the Community's Political Cooperation Ministerial Group, discussed with Dr. Kissinger the Community's draft declaration on Europe's future relations with the U.S.

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These first steps in forming a common European approach have an importance of their own, said Lord Carrington.

"Some may ask how important the attempt to formulate a common European approach really is. They may say that the real business is still done bilaterally between the United States and individual European Governments. Of course, it is true that the bilateral channel remains open and will continue to be used for much of the most important business which we and the other European states conduct with the United States. In the present early stage of our approach towards European union it would surely be impracticable if it were otherwise.

"But that does not mean that the first steps that have now been taken by Europe are not important."

The Defence Secretary quoted the U.S. Secretary of State, Dr. Kissinger, in confirmation of this view of the developing Community.

"At his press conference in New York on September 26 Dr. Kissinger said, 'The United States recognizes that this first attempt by Europe to speak with one voice on a political matter in transatlantic relationships is an event of the greatest significance.'

"He went on to voice the thought that, in historical retrospect, the meeting of the nine Foreign Ministers in Copenhagen at the beginning of September ... would be seen 'as one of the decisive events of the post-war period.'"

In terms of the conduct of British foreign policy, and for Europe, Lord Carrington went on, three points emerge.

"First ... movement along the lines laid down at the Paris meeting of the Nine Heads of Government in October when it was agreed that the aim of political cooperation between the member states of the Community was to deal with problems of current interest and, where possible, to formulate common medium- and long-term positions...

"Second ... there is now, so to speak, a chemistry at work within the Nine. They are increasingly confident that they have a sufficiently similar view of the outside world for it to be possible for them to embark on the definition of a common European position over specific issues and for specific purposes...

/"Third ...

"Third, those states outside Europe, both our friends, such as the United States, and those with which our relations are less satisfactory, now realize that in the future they will increasingly find that their dealings with the states of the European Community will be on the basis of common European positions agreed among the Nine."

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